

**Subcommittee on Africa, Global Human Rights and International Operations
Prepared Statement of Rep. Christopher H. Smith, Chairman**

**Foreign Relations Authorization for FY 2005-2006: Department of State
Management Initiatives**

April 14, 2005

The Subcommittee will come to order. I am pleased to convene this hearing of the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Human Rights and International Operations. Today we will be discussing management initiatives in the Department of State budget. This will be the first in a series of hearings devoted to the preparation and enactment of a Foreign Relations Authorization bill for fiscal years 2005 and 2006.

I am also pleased to welcome our distinguished witnesses, Acting Under Secretary of State for Management Christopher Burnham, and in our second panel, Vice President of the American Foreign Service Association, Louise Crane. Thank you for being here with us today.

The Administration's request for the Department of State FY 06 budget is \$9.82 billion, an increase of about \$1 billion, or 13.6%, over FY 05. Highlights of that budget include \$652 million for international broadcasting, a 10.2% increase; \$430 million for Education and Cultural Exchanges, a 20.9% increase; and a request for a more than doubling of U.S. contributions for international peacekeeping. Not included in the request are funding for the U.S. Embassies in Iraq and Afghanistan, which have been requested in the supplemental. In addition to security initiatives, which include \$1.5 billion for security-related construction of U.S. Embassies, \$690 million to increase security for diplomatic personnel, and \$930 million for border security, management initiatives – the focus of this hearing today – include \$249 million for information technology, and \$57 million for 221 new staffing positions for operational readiness.

Another major new management initiative included in this year's budget submission is a request for \$57 million to fund the Office of Stabilization and Reconstruction. This office would coordinate the U.S. government's civilian response to conditions in failed, failing and post-conflict states. This initiative to identify, train, and quickly deploy qualified civilians, in a surge capacity to address unforeseen exigencies, is long overdue. I regret that Ambassador Carlos Pascuale could not be here today to discuss this important new program, and I look forward to the possibility of his testimony in a future hearing.

In the course of these hearings, Members of the Subcommittee will have numerous specific questions, I am sure, for our witnesses today and those who will follow. Let me begin this process by stating a few central concerns, which I hope Under Secretary Burnham will be able to address.

First, there is a broad perception among the American people that government costs too much. Most Americans are uncomfortable with the idea of government deficits, but prefer to address the problem by reducing the costs of government rather than by paying more taxes.

The officials who are charged with conducting foreign relations of the United States have in recent years been particularly strong in their conviction that they and their department are understaffed, underpaid and generally not adequately appreciated by the American people or by the Congress.

However, after 9-11, I believe we have begun to see a shift in public attitudes - and Congressional support - regarding spending for foreign relations. In fact, the international affairs budget has grown from \$18.7 billion in FY 96, to a ten-year high last year of approximately \$30 billion. In addition to launching major new programs to combat HIV/AIDS and provide development assistance through the Millennium Challenge Account, the Bush Administration has also added 1,100 new personnel to the State Department under the Diplomatic Readiness Initiative and beefed up security at American Embassies around the world.

Nevertheless, while overall spending levels are important, how we choose to allocate the limited resources we have is an even better index of what really matters to our government. Many Americans believe that the cornerstone of our foreign policy should be the promotion of American values, that is, the protection and advancement of fundamental human rights of people around the world. Looking at the State Department budget, I see the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor has only 104 employees and a budget of just \$14.7 million.

While this is certainly an improvement from the last decade in which the Bureau had 52 employees and a budget of \$6 million, by way of contrast, a functional bureau similar in size and scope, the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES) has 50 percent more employees – 160 – and double the budget of DRL, at \$26 million. Surely the United States should desire to promote human rights as much as the environment, and reflect that in its allocation of financial resources.

Each of the six regional bureaus has an average of about 1,500 employees. These are the offices the Human Rights bureau sometimes has to contend with in ensuring that human rights are accorded their rightful priority against competing concerns. They have a combined budget of over \$1.5 billion, or about 100 times the budget of the Human Rights Bureau.

This gross disparity in resource allocation is not only a poignant symbol of the imbalance in our foreign policy priorities; it also has important practical consequences. For instance, Washington officials from the regional bureaus develop their expertise by taking trips to the regions in which they specialize. Officials in the Human Rights Bureau below the rank of Deputy Assistant Secretary almost never have the budget for such trips. It is an unfortunate fact of life that we usually get what we pay for.

Public diplomacy is another area of serious concern. Post 9-11, the role of public diplomacy in improving America's image around the world is understood to be more critical than ever. Adequate funding is essential to address this problem, and I applaud Congress' decision to increase the funding for public diplomacy in recent years, as well as support those increased funding levels requested this year.

However, legitimate questions remain about whether the programs currently being implemented are sufficient to truly change hearts and minds. A GAO study released this month about U.S. Public Diplomacy states that interagency coordination efforts are hampered by the lack of a National Communication Strategy. The report notes that several White House and State initiatives have been launched in 2002, 2003 and 2004 to coordinate and better target public diplomacy efforts, but that strategic and tactical communications plans are still in the drafting stage. A November 2004 independent assessment of the State Department by the Foreign Affairs Council also concluded that integration of public diplomacy into the policy process is still deficient. We look forward to the arrival of Karen Hughes as Under Secretary for Public Affairs, and are hopeful that she will quickly bring her numerous talents and experience to bear to address these problems.

Briefly, I would also like to say a few words about the importance of information technology. Prior to 2001, State's information technology was widely regarded as the weakest in the U.S. government. This state of affairs not only affected productivity and communication; it also had serious adverse effects on security and State's ability to attract and retain younger employees. Thanks to the implementation of a top-priority modernization program, State has completely replaced and modernized its hardware infrastructure and put internet on every desktop. However, the Department is still laboring under an outdated telegram system for all its official internal communications. Implementation of a 21st century messaging and archive retrieval system now under development is critical.

Finally, despite these concerns, I do want to congratulate the Administration for the strong results which have come out of several of its management initiatives. The number of persons taking the Foreign Service exam has jumped from 8,000 in 2000 to almost 20,000 last year, thanks to a dramatically revised recruitment system. Attrition due to normal causes during that same period declined from 4.6% to 2.9%. Training has expanded 25 percent. We will have questions about current proposals to followup these initiatives, particularly some of the personnel and pay issues that will be raised by AFSA in our second panel, but I want to say at the outset that we appreciate the efforts by the Department to put its own house in order.